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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, California, of a vocabulary mastery program using a multisensory approach. It includes a detailed outline of the development of the program, the procedures students follow for self-instruction and self-pacing, and the results of the program for the first 12 participants. (TJ)

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THE AUDIO-VISUAL VOCABULARY PROGRAM (AVVP):

AN INNOVATION IN PRACTICE

Elizabeth A. Negrete-Karzag

The English political writer Edmund Burke once wrote to a friend "A very great part of the mischiefs that vex this world arise from words." This quote exemplifies a typical difficulty encountered by "underprepared" students in a specific discipline for the first time. "Underprepared" is defined for purposes of this paper as a student who has not had past experience in a specific discipline or who has not had previous opportunities for exposure to vocabulary associated with that discipline.

Students, counselors and faculty at Evergreen Valley College, in southeast San Jose, focused this problem of "words" as a distinctive vexation which underprepared students face as a mischievous reality. In response to this problem, I engaged in the development of an Audio-Visual Vocabulary Program (AVVP) to meet general vocabulary needs in specific disciplines.

The existing program

Students at Evergreen Valley College can enroll in an open entry/exit study assistance guidance course under the Learning Assistance and Alternatives Program (LAAP). A variety of math, business, study skill, communication skill, vocational, English as a second language, self-development and special subject programs are available for drop-in students and for enrolled students. Many materials used in these various programs utilize audio-visual equipment.

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Students' needs stated

The Evergreen faculty, staff and students who had voiced their vexation with "words" to me, indicated a need of a vocabulary program which involved active learning of auditory, visual and contextual recognition of specific foundational vocabulary terms. In addition, pronunciation of terms in verbal communication was a primary concern of faculty and non-native English speaking students. A review of the LAAP vocabulary materials revealed a deficit of specialized vocabulary programs for vocabulary acquisition and apperception. Existent commercial vocabulary programs in LAAP included mainly rote review of general everyday vocabulary with a sample of exercises using the vocabulary in context. No program was found to offer a multi-sensory, mastery approach to learning vocabulary.

Upon the recommendations and input from faculty and students representing the nursing and social science disciplines, I chose to develop foundational vocabulary word lists for the AVVP program for three courses under these two disciplines: anatomy and physiology, general psychology, and U.S. history.

AVVP design and development

In consideration of including all of the students' needs for a specialized vocabulary program, I established the following detailed outline for the development of the AVVP program.

A. Selection of discipline

1. Instructor input
2. Student input

B. Collection of vocabulary words

1. Textbook glossaries
2. Instructor input
3. Student input

C. Arrangement of vocabulary words

1. Hierarchy established (words in beginning sets assist in defining words in later sets)
2. Words divided into sets (10 to 14 words in each set)
3. Simple definitions used (consult instructors, reference:)
4. Type terms and definition on Language Master (trademark of Bell and Howell) cards

D. Construction of the program

1. Tests

- a. pretests (random selection of 20 words including at least one term from each set)
- b. set post tests (simple matching of words with definitions - definitions are those which appear on the Language Master cards)
- c. final post tests (same as D.1.a. including words not on pretests)

2. Answer keys - self-correcting

- a. objective test answers
- b. percentile key - for analyses of mastery level

3. Audio, verbal and kinesthetic activities/contextual comprehension activities

a. establish from objectives Language Master card activities

1. word recognition practice
2. pronunciation practice
3. spelling practice

b. establish from objectives contextual comprehension activities

1. term etymologies, multiple meanings
2. structural analysis
3. context practice

4. Record keeping instructions and charts
 - a. test scores and unmastered terms
 - b. exercise and activity charts
5. Student guidebook
 - a. introduction/rationale of programs
 - b. organization of charts, exercises and tests
 - c. Language Master operation: diagrams and instructions

E. Recording

1. Guidebook introduction and instructions
2. Spelling tests for each subject on separate tapes
3. Vocabulary terms on Language Master cards

F. Dissemination of availability of AVVP at Evergreen

1. Campus newspaper
2. Memo to all faculty and staff
3. Attend counselor meetings, supportive services staff meetings
4. Personal contact with instructors
5. Article in local Community College and Junior College newsletter

Student procedures

Students follow the taped guidebook procedures for self-instruction and self-pacing. After students take the pretests, they begin using the vocabulary card set which precedes any terms missed on the definition pretests. Using the guidebook directions, students use Language Master cards in each set by: listening to the term pronounced; recording and listening to their own pronunciation; reading and writing the term; and practice using the term in several contextual exercises. After completing the guidebook steps with each Language Master vocabulary card set, students take set post tests for immediate feedback of their vocabulary mastery. After all card sets have been completed, students take the final post tests. All tests, scores and exercises are

recorded and organized by the students for easy access and review. Students have constant visual feedback of their work and progress in the AVVP program as well as human feedback from LAAP staff members throughout the program.

AVVP's pilot program results

The first twelve participants in pilot AVVP program were from a diversified cultural and social background. Some were recent high school graduates and others had been out of school for 10 to 27 years. Over half were attending college for the first time.

Chart I represents the students' pretest, last set post test and final post test scores (if they were able to complete all card sets). Only definition test scores are indicated in Charts I, II and III.

More than half of the students complete the final post tests. These students spent an average of 52 to 78 hours during a 16 week semester working on the AVVP program. Other students who were enrolled for fewer units in the guidance program worked an average of 13 to 26 hours on the AVVP program.

Chart II compares pretest scores to final post test scores and indicates net gain. Chart III compares students' mean pretest scores with mean final post test scores and indicates average net gain for those students who complete all card sets of the AVVP program.

KEY TO CHART I

P = general psychology

A&P = anatomy and physiology

H = U.S. history

Chart I

Subject No.	AVVP Subject	Pretest Score	Last set Post test Score	Final Post test Score
1	P	65%	100%	90%
2	P	65%	100%	--
3	H	40%	80%	--
4	P	65%	100%	100%
5	H	45%	77.5%	90%
6	H	50%	84%	--
7	P	80%	100%	100%
8	P	85%	100%	100%
9	H	70%	100%	--
10	A&P	80%	100%	95%
11	A&P	45%	100%	100%
12	A&P	85%	100%	--

Student No.	Pretest Score	Final Post test Score	Net Gain
1	65%	90%	25%
4	65%	100%	35%
5	45%	90%	45%
7	90%	100%	10%
8	85%	100%	15%
10	80%	95%	15%
11	45%	100%	55%

Chart II

Mean Pretest Score	Mean Final Post test Score	Average Net Gain
68%	96%	28%

Chart III

As indicated by all set post test scores and especially by the net gains illustrated in Chart II, it is evident that students increased their vocabulary by using the AVVP program. The scores available from pretests, set post tests and final post tests, (Charts I & II), demonstrate vocabulary improvement in specific subject areas.

Students' oral and written reports indicated that the AVVP vocabulary they studied enhanced their understanding of lecture courses. In addition to the positive subjective analyses of students' vocabulary improvement, students' final grades in coinciding lecture courses were average or above average. For the future

Future investigations could involve a variety of AVVP experimental groups compared with a control group of equally matched students for determination of optimum learning conditions for students who lack a foundation vocabulary in a specific discipline. Such an investigation could answer the question "Is it academically more advantageous for a student to concurrently enroll in the AVVP program which coincides with his/her lecture class, or is it more advantageous for a student to complete the AVVP program in a particular discipline prior to enrolling in the lecture class?" Future data collected on each student enrolled

in the AVVP program could evince supportive results for one procedure over the other. However, as in all studies and new programs, one cannot exclude or control all factors which may contribute to student success. Such factors as individualized tutoring, number of hours spent studying vocabulary words, number of hours employed per week and self-concept should be considered in future studies.

Innovation expansion

AVVP results thus far demonstrate that the step by step vocabulary mastery of word sets is a contributing factor of AVVP participants' overall academic success in specific disciplines. The AVVP program provides Evergreen students with an innovative approach to specialized vocabulary acquisition and apperception. Currently, students use the program to meet their personal needs. Some use the set post tests for review after they have taken an anatomy and physiology or psychology course. Non-native English speaking students use the Language Master vocabulary cards for auditory and word recognition, pronunciation and spelling skills. Several Evergreen faculty members and students are developing vocabulary lists for specific classes for incorporation into the AVVP format. It is most encouraging to experience faculty and students involved in the expansion of the original innovation in meeting the individual needs of students.